

Historic Events:

The World Cup—A pictorial history on stamps

by John F. Dunn

We present here a sampler of our article on the pictorial history of the World Cup. It is an example of the content in our monthly online-only publication, *StampNewsOnline*. To introduce you to *SNO*, you can access the complete article, from the first, 1930, competition to the 2014 World Cup at www.stampnewsonline.com.

Also at *SNO* you can access a sampling of the many other subjects that are covered, along with information on how you can subscribe.

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With the World Cup beginning on June 12, 2014 and running through the championship game on July 13 in Brazil, we present here stamps that trace the history of this worldwide event from the first, 1930, competition to date.

Prelude:

The world's most popular sport, football—known in the United States as soccer—has elements that trace back to ancient Greece and Rome, but the rules of the sport as we know it today came into fruition in the mid-19th Century in England, where various forms of the game were played as far back as the eight century.

The first formal “International” competition was held in 1872, albeit it between England and Scotland. By 1900 the sport was sufficiently widespread that it was introduced as a demonstration sport (with no medals awarded), and then as a medal sport in the 1908 London Olympics.

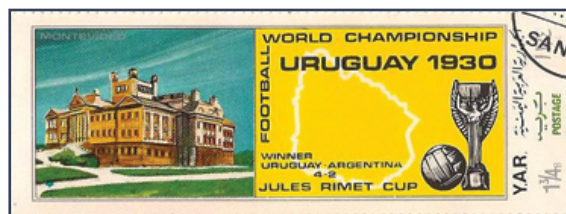
It was not until the 1920 Olympics that a non-European nation competed—Egypt, along with 13 European teams—in a competition that was won by Belgium. Uruguay won the 1924 and 1928 Olympics.

By 1930, under the leadership of its President, Jules Rimet, the Federation Internationale de Football Associations (FIFA) was ready to stage its own tournaments, free

of the amateur restrictions of the Olympics. Having won the previous two Olympic Championships, and with the South American nation celebrates its 100th Anniversary of independence, Uruguay became the natural choice as the first World Cup host country.

1930, Uruguay

The first World Cup was limited in international representation, primarily because of the expense of transporting a team across the seas. As a result, the



From comprehensive sets recording the history of successive World Cups: top, Yemen, showing a landmark in Montevideo, Uruguay; left, the Championship game teams, Uruguay and Argentina (the latter in the familiar blue and white stripes); center, the Jules Rimet cup being presented to a representative from Uruguay; also, right, a 2000 Uruguay issue for the 100th Anniversary of the Uruguay Association, also recognizing the 1930 World Cup victory.

tournament consisted of 13 teams: 4 from Europe, 7 from South America, and 2 from North America.

All of the matches were played in one city, Montevideo. The original plan was to play all matches in a new stadium built expressly for the tournament, the 90,000-seat Estadio Centenario, but construction delays forced some early matches to be played in two other Montevideo stadiums.

Despite the sparse turnout of teams, the tournament itself was a success, with the host nation retaining its world leadership with a victory over Argentina in front of 93,000 spectators.

Such was the fervor surrounding the final between neighboring countries, spectators were searched for weapons and the referee agreed to officiate only after his safety had been secured and a boat prepared for a quick escape should he need it. Some things never change.

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Jules Rimet and the first trophy, which came to be known as the Rimet Cup, on a stamp from Hungary.